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TO: North Dakota Educators

DATE: December 17, 2015

RE: Title I Credential Requirements

On October 20, 2015, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) disseminated a statewide memorandum and survey pertaining to the current Title I credentialing system to gather public feedback regarding the idea of repealing the Title I credentials. The idea was proposed to help address the current North Dakota teacher shortage by reducing barriers to attract teachers to the state, particularly in rural areas. The department sought this feedback to inform the decision making process.

This credentialing system is not a requirement under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), but is part of the North Dakota Administrative Code (also known as administrative rule).

The NDDPI values the current Title I credentialing system, but also recognizes the challenges faced by educators, schools, and districts. Since the NDDPI is in the process of updating its entire set of administrative rules, this was the most logical time to have a discussion regarding the current credentialing system.

The NDDPI received a favorable response with over 300 people responding to the survey. Based on the responses received, approximately 65% voted to repeal the credentials and approximately 35% voted to keep the credentials. The majority of those voting to keep the credentials submitted comments strongly voicing their opposition to repeal.

It is the decision of the NDDPI to maintain the Title I credentials; however, to add flexibility by making multiple changes through the administrative rules process. Our intent is to begin making changes through the administrative rules process beginning in January 2016. We anticipate the new regulations would go into effect on July 1, 2016. Outlined below are some of the changes we intend to make to provide more flexibility to our North Dakota educators, schools, and districts.

- Provisional Renewals – Teachers who do not have the required coursework are able to get a provisional Title I credential that gives the individual two years to obtain the required coursework. We intend to revise this section to allow individuals to extend their provisional credential if they were unable to obtain the coursework during the two-year timeframe.
- Veteran Teacher Exemption – We intend to revise the administrative rules and add an exemption for veteran teachers that waives the additional coursework requirements for teachers who have seven or more years of contracted teaching experience.

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This will allow veteran teachers who would like to move into a Title I position to do so without having to obtain the additional coursework. Teachers will still need to be highly qualified as determined by the Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB), and have a major in a content area. The highly qualified teacher (HQT) requirements in NCLB are eliminated in the newly reauthorized federal law known as the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). All HQT laws and rules will be reviewed during the next North Dakota legislative session.

- Waiver – We intend to revise the administrative rules to add a new waiver section. Schools that can demonstrate the inability to find a credentialed Title I teacher can apply for a waiver to use Title I funds to pay for non-credentialed staff to perform Title duties.

The NDDPI believes it has outlined a fair compromise to meet the needs of educators, schools and districts. This plan maintains our high standards and expectations for the staff who work with our most at-risk and vulnerable students, while still providing flexibility and options.

If anyone has questions or would like to offer additional recommendations for consideration as we begin the administrative rules renewal process in January, please contact Sandy Peterson at (701) 328-2170 or smpeterson@nd.gov.

Sincerely,



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Laurie Matzke
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